data available on acquisition of agricultural land for non-agricultural purposes. However, as per available estimates, there is a marginal decline in agricultural land in the last 5 years from183.63 million ha. in 1998-99 to 182.92 million ha. in 2002-03; during the same period,land under non agricultural purposes has increased from 22.80 million ha. to 24.25 million ha.

Land is a State subject and, therefore, it is for the States to bring about suitable legislation regarding regulation of conversion of agricultural land for non-agricultural purposes. Government is implementing a Centrally sponsored Programme to State Land Use Boards (SLUBs). Some of the States, through their SLUBs have issued instructions and executive orders to the line departments of their Government to ensure that prime agricultural land is not diverted for non-agricultural purposes, and if it becomes necessary to do so, then efforts may be made to provide equivalent land in lieu of diverted land.

Government of India is also implementing various Watershed Development Programmes, namely, (i) National Watershed Development Project for Rainfed Areas (NWDPRA), (ii) Soil Conservation for Enhancing Productivity of Degraded Lands in the Catchments of River Valley Project and Flood Prone River (RVP & FPR), (iii) Reclamation of Alkali Soils (RAS), (iv) Watershed Development Project in Shifting Cultivation Areas (WDPSCA), (v) Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP), (vi) Desert Development Programme (DDP) and (vii) Integrated Waste-land Development Programme (IWDP) to develop the degraded lands in the country. Parts of such developed lands are brought under cultivation to meet shortage of land.

Setting up of National Rain-Fed Area Authority

2586. SHRI B.J. PANDA:
MS. PRAMILA BOHIDAR:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to set up National Rain-fed Area Authority to look into ways to improve agriculture productivity in regions dependent on rainfall;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what is the action of Government to improve the productivity of rain-fed regions of Orissa under the above project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) National Rainfed Area Authority has been established *vide* Government Order dated 3rd November, 2006

(b) National Rainfed Area Authority (NRAA) has a two tier structure. The first tier is the Governing Board that will provide necessary leadership and appropriate coordination in implementation of programmes. The Governing Board will be chaired by the Union Agriculture Minister and co-chaired by the Union Rural Development Minister. The second tier would be the Executive Committee consisting of technical experts and representatives from stake bolder Ministries.

The Executive Committee would be headed by a full time CEO and will also have five other full time technical experts. The mandate of the Authority are:

(1) To prepare a perspective plan, outlining the national strategy and road map for holistic and sustainable development of rainfed farming areas.

(2) To evolve common guidelines for all schemes of different Ministries including Externally Aided Projects (EAPs) for development of Rainfed/ Dry land Farming systems.

(3) To coordinate and bring convergence within and among agricultural and wasterland development programmes being implemented in rainfed areas of the country.

(4) To identify rainfed areas in different States which need priority attention and prepare watershed development programmes for integrated natural resource management in consultation with States, focusing on multi dimensional crop, livestock, horticulture, agri-pasture integrated systems and programmes for landless farming communities.

(5) To identify gaps in inpur supply, credit availability, dissemination of appropriate technology and other requirements relevant for rainfed areas.

(6) Guide the implementing agencies on priority setting and monitor the specific interventions required.

(7) To develop plans/programmes for capacity building of Centre/State Government functionaries in rainfed areas.

(8) To suggest modalities to strengthen National and State Level Institutions concerned with Rainfed/Dryland areas, and establish institutional kinkages with prioritized watersheds.

(9) Monitor disbursement of rural credit/insurance cover/safety net programmes developed for rainfed areas.

(10) Set the research agenda including a critical appraisal of on-going programmes and promote diffusion of required knowledge for integrated farming in rainfed areas to district and lower level authorities.

(11) To evaluate the effectiveness of completed watersheds and concurrent evaluation of on-going programmes.

(c) NRAA is a policy making and advisory body and has just been established.

However Government has already taken up steps under various developmental schemes relating to seeds watershed development, extension, machinery, marketing etc. to address the issue of productivity in Orissa.

Cultivation of Sugarcane in Brazil

†2587. SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India has formulated a plan to grow sugarcane in Brazil;

(b) whether it is also that there is a proposal to take one lakh hectares of land on lease for implementation of this plan; and

(c) if so, the justification for this plan and whether it won't be prejudicial to the farmers of the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) There is no proposal before the Government to grow sugarcane in Brazil.

(c) The Question does not arise.

Grameen Bhandaran Yojana

2588. SHRI SUDARSHAN AKARAPU: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have launched a new scheme "Grameen Bhandaran Yojana" to create storage capacity in rural areas;

(b) if so, the number of godowns set up under the scheme in the rural areas as on 31st October, 2006, State-wise;

(c) the total storage capacity created, so far, under the scheme; and

(d) the total amount sanctioned and spent under the scheme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Since inception of the scheme on 1.4.2001, upto 31st October, 2006 in the rural areas of the country, 12,777 storage projects have been

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.